

## How do I know what job is right for me?

In our diverse economy, there are many ways to achieve workforce success, and they don't all follow the same straight or orderly path. Employers in Southeast Minnesota now provide more than 236,000 jobs and the state has nearly 2.8 million jobs, so it can be hard to know which one might be right for you.

**Assessments and career exploration are a great way to help students and jobseekers make the best possible choices.** What things do you like to do? What's your personality style? What skills and abilities do you have? There are a variety of free career assessments available online at sites including CareerOneStop ([careeronestop.org](http://careeronestop.org)), O\*NET ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)), and DEED (<https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/job-guide/>) that can help.

Knowing more about yourself is critical to career planning. People choose different jobs at different points in their lives, and for very different reasons, but no one can do it for you.

**You are in charge of your career planning process – you get to make the decisions!**



## How much education or training will I need to get that job?

Graduating from high school is an important first step, but from there the path to success can go in many different directions. For example, students and jobseekers can go straight to work, into the military, on to college, start an apprenticeship, or something else, depending on your career goals.

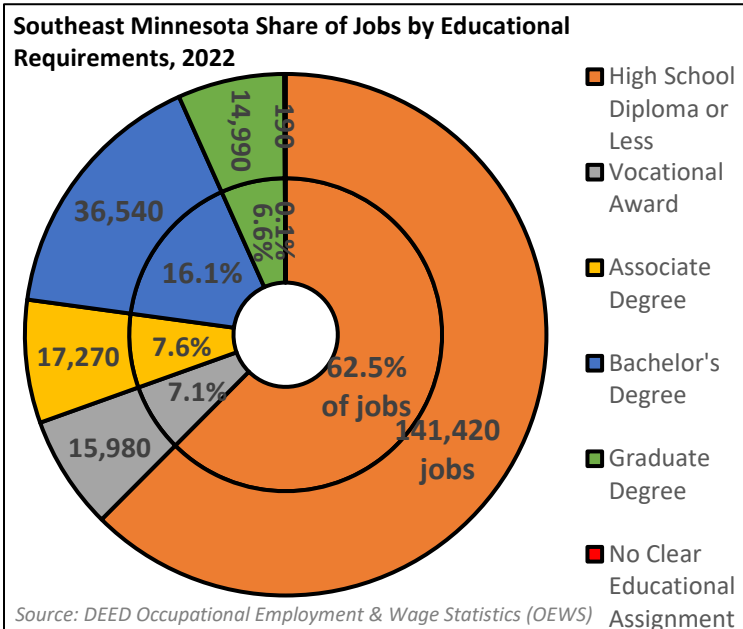


In other words, there are many pathways into the labor market. Some are short-term solutions, while others are long-term decisions. There are costs and benefits to every approach, and there are practical steps that students and jobseekers can take to make the most out of their career planning and educational investment.

It's best to pick something that you enjoy doing, and that matches your skills and personality. Once you've found something you like, it's important to know that every occupation requires some training, ranging from short-term to long-term. **Whether you go to college or not, on-the-job training and lifelong learning is critical to your career success.**

## Do I need to go to college?

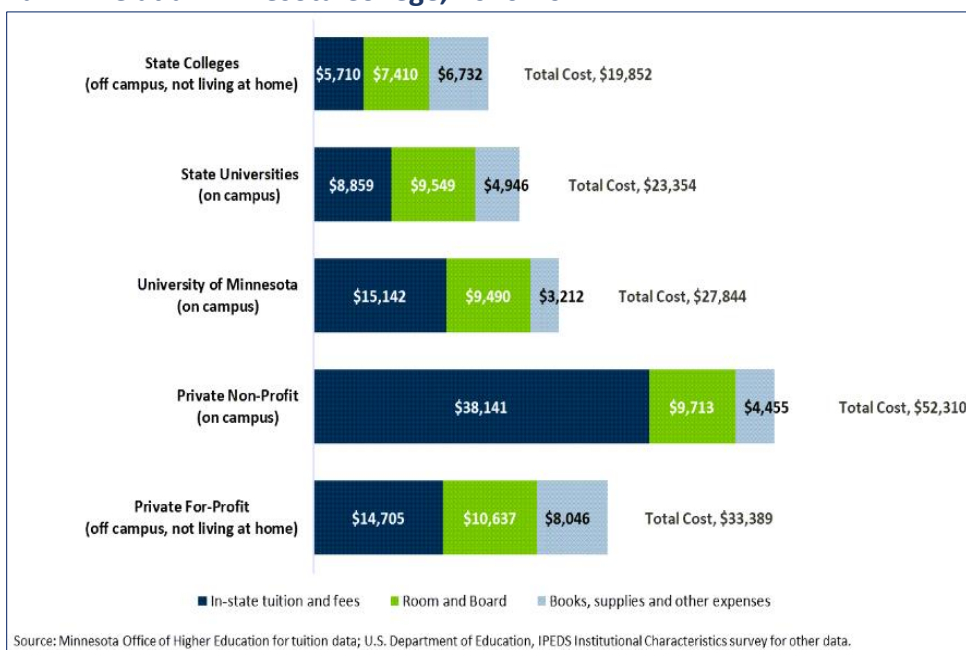
College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and school teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. ***Students and jobseekers might be surprised to learn that over 62.5% of all jobs in Southeast Minnesota can be started with a high school diploma or less, and just under one-third require college.***



## How much does college cost?

While education is typically a worthwhile investment, ***college can be expensive*** – with average annual expenses ranging between \$12,000 and about \$52,000 per year in Minnesota. If living at home, an associate degree at a state college in 2021 cost roughly \$25,000 (\$12,442 x 2 years) while a four-year bachelor's degree at the University of Minnesota passed \$110,000 (\$27,844 x 4 years). The Office of Higher Education provides a list of tuition and fees for every college in Minnesota ([www.ohe.state.mn.us](http://www.ohe.state.mn.us)).

### Average Annual Expense for a Resident Undergraduate Attending Full-Time at a Minnesota College, 2020-2021



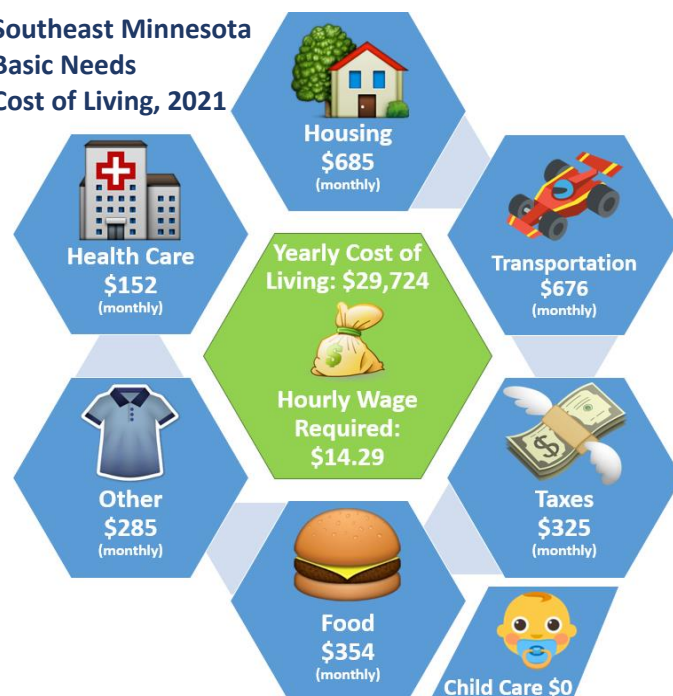
For those who go to college, your ***choice of major matters*** – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money. For example, students who graduated from a Minnesota college or university with an associate degree in Registered Nursing were earning over \$61,000 within 3 years of graduating, while students with a 4-year bachelor's degree in Parks, Recreation & Leisure Studies were earning under \$35,000. DEED's [Graduate Employment Outcomes tool](#) can help potential students compare the costs of college with the typical earnings of graduates from programs at every Minnesota postsecondary institution to determine if their chosen major makes financial sense.

## How much income will I need to make?

DEED's [Cost of Living tool](#) provides a yearly estimate of the basic needs cost of living in Minnesota, for individuals and families, by county, region, and statewide. The tool uses federal and state data to examine monthly living costs in seven categories: food, housing, health care, transportation, child care, other necessities, and net taxes.

According to 2021 estimates, the basic needs cost of living for a single person in Southeast Minnesota was **\$29,724**, which would require an hourly wage of **\$14.29** over the course of a full-time, year-round work schedule (2,080 hours). The highest costs were for housing and transportation, but of course both of those are greatly impacted by where you choose to live. Other costs would also vary based on your lifestyle, family size, and work status, and can go up or down based on your choices.

### Southeast Minnesota Basic Needs Cost of Living, 2021

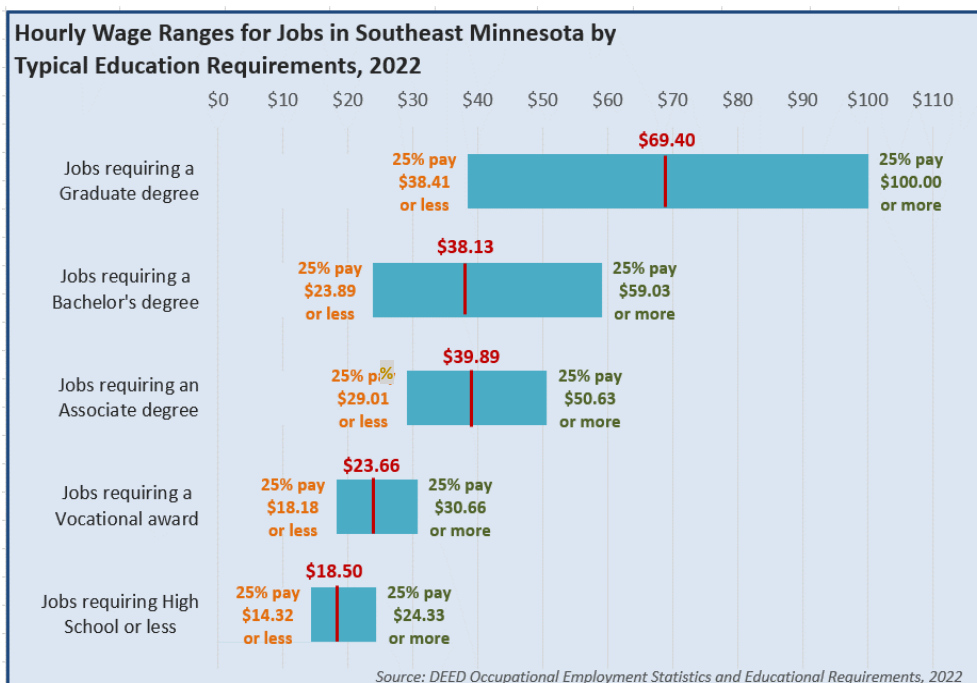


Source: DEED Cost of Living tool, 2021

## How much income will I actually make?

While income isn't the only thing that matters when choosing a career, everyone wants and needs to make money. In general, the job you choose determines the amount of money you're able to make over the course of your lifetime.

Data show that hourly wages rise for each additional level of education completed; however, it's important to see that **there are opportunities for jobs that provide livable wages at every level of education**, including many that boast strong current and future demand in your region of the state.



Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics and Educational Requirements, 2022

Put simply, **not all great jobs require college, and not all college graduates end up in great paying jobs**. You can find state and regional wage information for about 800 occupations in Minnesota using DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics tool (<https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/oes/>).



## What jobs are in demand in my region?

According to DEED's [Occupations in Demand tool](#), there are over 280 occupations showing relatively high demand in Southeast Minnesota, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees:

**Occupations in Demand by Typical Required Education in Southeast Minnesota with Median Annual Wage, 2021**

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Home Health and Personal Care Aides \$30,145/yr	Nursing Assistants \$33,957/yr	Registered Nurses \$76,734/yr	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education \$53,146/yr
Retail Salespersons \$28,932/yr	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses \$48,351/yr	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians \$55,177/yr	General and Operations Managers \$79,034/yr
Cashiers \$25,982/yr	Medical Assistants \$41,596/yr	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers \$59,965/yr	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and CTE \$57,121/yr
Fast Food and Counter Workers \$24,598/yr	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics \$37,127/yr	Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists \$79,803/yr	Accountants and Auditors \$64,075/yr
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers \$45,543/yr	Electricians \$57,423/yr	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$51,741/yr	Subst. abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors \$51,967/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers \$43,858/yr	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrig. Mechanics & Installers \$49,409/yr	Surgical Technologists \$57,436/yr	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term \$35,428/yr
Waiters and Waitresses \$25,523/yr	Machinists \$48,003/yr	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians \$65,570/yr	Project Mgmt. Specialists and Business Ops. Specialists, All Other \$60,798/yr
Stockers and Order Fillers \$30,099/yr	Industrial Machinery Mechanics \$52,667/yr	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians \$37,547/yr	Pharmacists \$134,918/yr
Customer Service Representatives \$37,334/yr	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists \$29,742/yr	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Techs \$58,234/yr	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and CTE \$60,938/yr
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary \$29,982/yr	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics \$36,614/yr	Forest and Conservation Technicians \$47,186/yr	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products \$54,030/yr

*Source: DEED Occupations in Demand*

## Who can help me with my job search?

There are a lot of people and resources that are willing and able to help you find a job or plan for your career, but it is up to you to reach out to them and put their advice into action.

***The sooner you get started forging your path, the better!***

### **CAREER INFORMATION RESOURCES IN SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA:**

**Workforce Development, Inc.**

2070 College View Road East

Rochester MN 55904

Web: <https://workforcedevelopmentinc.org/contact/>

**CareerForceMN.com**

Web: [www.careerforcemn.com](http://www.careerforcemn.com)

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